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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BISHKEK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 025546

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/17/2019  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)  
SUBJECT: MANAS: PREPARING FOR DISCUSSIONS

REF: BISHKEK 185

Classified By: DAS George Krol for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) This is an action request in support of upcoming U.S.-Kyrgyz discussions for continued access to Manas Air Base. The Department requests Ambassador seek a meeting with Foreign Minister Sarbayev or highest possible level to obtain answers to the following questions as well as convey points noted below. Department would appreciate a report on this encounter as soon as possible to facilitate planning. Please see additional request at para 9.

¶2. (C) Please confirm Foreign Minister Sarbayev,s availability to begin discussions in Bishkek on April 1, per reftel. We understand Sarbayev may attend the March 31 conference on Afghanistan in the Hague. If there is any doubt regarding his availability on April 1, please inform the Department as the USG team could then plan to start talks on April 2. However, operational timelines related to the shifting of operations to alternate locations do require a commencement of discussions as soon as possible.

¶3. (C) Please inquire about the composition of the Kyrgyz team. We understand Sarbayev will lead, but who else will join? Our Kyrgyz interlocutor must have Presidential authority to negotiate.

¶4. (C) Please confirm venue for the discussions. The USG team must have quick access to secure communications and will not go to a remote location.

¶5. (C) Please reiterate the U.S. team will arrive in Bishkek to discuss continued access to Manas Air Base based on our February 2 offer.

¶6. (C) Ambassador Jackson McDonald, Senior Advisor for Political-Military Negotiations and Agreements, will lead an interagency USG team of about 12 people and intends to make one/one visit to Bishkek to conclude discussions. The team will comprise representatives from the State Department, Defense Department, Central Command, the embassy and the Manas base.

¶7. (C) Please reiterate that if our sides cannot reach agreement during an early April meeting, the USG team is empowered to discuss an orderly withdrawal of U.S. forces from Manas Air Base.

¶8. (C) The U.S. does not intend to announce the arrival or composition of this team or discuss it publicly.

¶9. (C) Post is requested to develop a set of all possible questions, issues and approaches the Kyrgyz side may raise with the team and provide post recommended responses.

CLINTON